

EXCLUSIVE

Repo: The Genetic Opera's New 4K Theatrical Rerelease Is Just The Beginning

"Repo is its own thing, and I think that's the essence of who we are."

★ BY DAIS JOHNSTON

5 HOURS AGO



THE INVERSE INTERVIEW

The 2000s were an amazing time to be a lover of **weird musicals**. It was the era of *A Very Potter Musical*/before Darren Criss defected to *Glee*, and the era of *Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog*. But more than anything, it was the era of *Repo*.

Repo! The Genetic Opera is the kind of movie that shouldn't have happened, a gothic, over-the-top dystopian musical that managed to star actors from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Goodfellas*, and *Spy Kids*, as well as Paris Hilton. The film, an adaptation of the stage show of the same name, was directed by Darren Lynn Bousman and starred Terrance Zdunich as the GraveRobber, the narrator of this sick little world. It's been called a feature-length Evanesence video, *Succession* for goths, and *Morbius* if it were a musical, but none of these comparisons truly capture the viewing experience.

Now this cult classic is coming to theaters with a new 4K remaster. *Inverse* spoke to Bousman and Zdunich about the surprising legacy of this movie, and what could come next for it — including a possible return to the stage.

■ *Goodfellas'* Paul Sorvino, a trained opera singer, sings his heart out in *Repo! A Genetic Opera*. TWISTED PICTURES/KOBAL/SHUTTERSTOCK

Repo opens with a comic-book-style prologue that establishes the world of this sci-fi hellscape. In a dystopian future, organ failure is taking lives at an alarming rate. The only hope is to lease new organs from the megacorporation GeneCo, but if you default on your payments, then the organ keeping you alive can be repoe'd by legal assassins. At the center of it all is Rotti Largo, CEO of GeneCo, who chooses that his legacy won't go to any of his spoiled children but instead to the young, sickly Shilo (Alexa Vega).

But you don't watch *Repo* for the plot, you watch it for the vibes. Every image is gorgeously crafted, and the songs are full of the baroque largeness that could only come from a movie created during the peak of My Chemical Romance's popularity. Every character belts out tales of surgery and secrets, and it's all taken deathly seriously. It's no wonder, then, that this movie has become a beloved (to some) cinematic masterpiece.

"We went on the road for on and off probably 90 days touring *Repo*," Darren Lynn Bousman tells *Inverse*. "And one of the things that I found pretty shocking was how it's become multigenerational. You have parents who are showing it to their kids, and now their kids are showing it to their kids. It's been this thing that's been passed down."



■ Darren Lynn Bousman on the set of *Repo! The Genetic Opera* in 2007. TWISTED PICTURES/KOBAL/SHUTTERSTOCK

That wasn't really in the game plan originally. "We were positioned to be a failure," Bousman says. "We were positioned to come out in two theaters, and that's not what happened. We're still here. It's been 17, going on 18 years later, and we're still here. We're still in theaters. We're still having people come up to us and show us their tattoos or their costumes. We've never left, we've just gained a bigger army every year."

And the theatrical rerelease in 4K is sure to make this army larger still. "It has that Alice in Wonderland thing that I always wanted it to have that you feel like when *Repo* began, you're transported into another world," Bousman says. "It just feels more immersive as a viewing experience than it ever has."

But Bousman isn't content with just a one-off event, and he's already preparing for a future physical release. Filmmaker Spooky Dan is currently cutting together a collection of bonus features.

"My wife, Laura, had shot hundreds of hours while we were making it, both in the recording studio, on set, in post, on the road show that's never been seen," Bousman says. "So he's cutting that together as well as new interviews where he just got through interviewing the cast now, everyone."

■ *Repo! The Genetic Opera* is playing in theaters now.

■ *Repo* is its own thing," Zdunich says, "and I think that's the essence of who we are."

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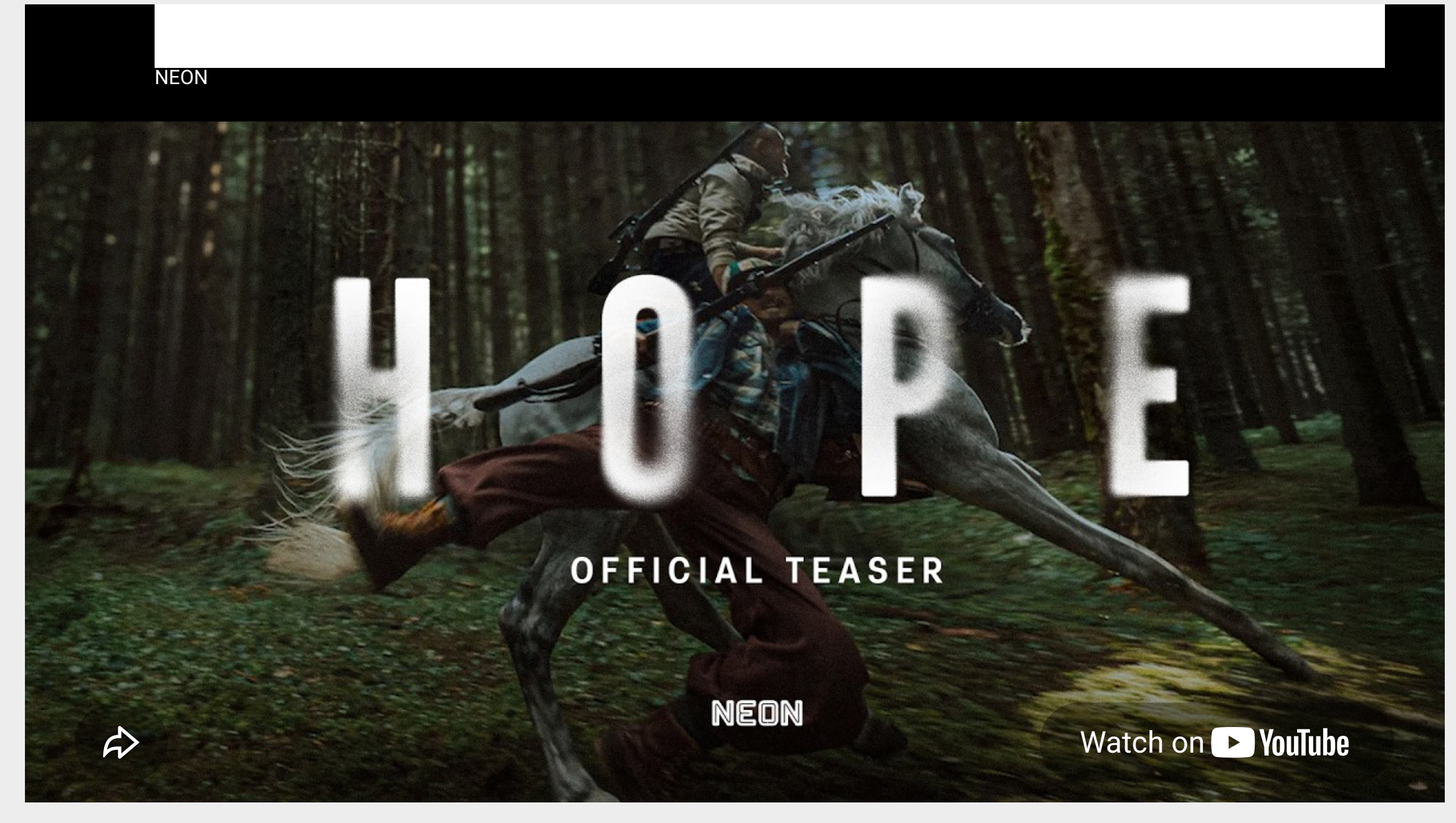
★ BY DAIS JOHNSTON

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Ever since *Alien*, otherworldly beings have been used as the perfect strange enemy in creature features. Between *The Thing*, *Annihilation*, and *Cloverfield*, alien invasions and fights for survival are all over film history. But with that popularity comes an expectation, and now these movies risk being a little repetitive.

At the Cannes Film Festival, a new creature feature from a proven Korean filmmaker is dividing critics — and now fans have the opportunity to get a sense for things themselves with a brand-new trailer. Check out the teaser trailer for the movie below:



Hope is the latest movie from Korean filmmaker Na Hong-jin, who previously directed *The Chaser*, *The Yellow Sea*, and *The Wailing*. According to *Deadline*, the synopsis for the movie is as follows: "In Hope Harbor, a remote village near the Demilitarized Zone, police outpost chief Bum-seok receives word from locals that a tiger has appeared. As the village erupts into panic, Bum-seok is forced to confront a reality beyond belief."

While we only have the teaser trailer, the movie has already screened at Cannes, so we have reactions from critics. Apparently, the first hour of this 2-hour-and-40-minute-long movie is one long set piece following the chase of the creature at the center of the movie. While it evoked comparisons to *Alien*, *Predator*, and even *Attack on Titan*, some were critical of the shoddy CGI once the creature actually showed up, with *IndieWire's* **David Ehrlich** even comparing it to *The Mummy Returns*, one of the most infamous examples of bad CGI that takes you out of the story.

■ The main creature is being hidden from *Hope's* marketing, and that fact may be hiding the movie's biggest downfall. NEON

Hope's letterboxed rankings look about as scattered as they can be, so there's no way to tell how this will hit after it's distributed by NEON, which acquired U.S. distribution rights before it even premiered. Maybe this will be the next big sci-fi horror creature feature, standing alongside cinematic classics, or maybe this flaw will completely ruin any semblance of suspension of disbelief.

But perhaps there's a logical explanation to this that could solve everything: a simple production timeline crunch. Director Na Hong-jin told *Deadline* that what was shown at Cannes wasn't a final product. "I was thinking I should have more applauses...I need to work on it harder," he said. "To be honest with you I didn't have enough time to finish this film for Cannes. There's still work to do. I was working on the sound just the day before traveling here."

With that in mind, it's very possible we could see this film go through another round of post-production that could fix all the issues critics had. But even as it is, there were plenty of critics who were lauding it as the future of the genre — it can only get better from here.

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Hope is scheduled to release in U.S. theaters in fall 2026.

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